1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

culture or themselves against a superior culture and ruthless "civilized" bandits. Their only consolation is Kuma and the Land of Kuma.

Nevertheless, being realists they not only continue their daily activities of hunting and gathering foods, but also in finding daily solace through their environment and the shamanistic contact with Kuma. The Yaruro is nature conscious. Perhaps his lonely existence has made him ecstatically responsible to the world about him, for often they talked of the beauty of various phenomena; but stronger than any such feeling is their sense of intimate relationship with the sun, the moon, the stars, their animal life. The falling stars at night are interpreted by them to be messengers sent by Kuma to encourage her people, the Yaruros; the moon is friendly, and on moonless nights the stars represent the crowds of their ancestors who live with Kuma. The wind blows incessantly and it blows to them the roar of the araguatos (the howlers), which, to them, represent distant relatives once human beings, but changed into monkeys by life in the trees at the time of the great flood; the toninos, frolicking at night in the water, are also another race who failed to climb the rope which Hatchawa let down to bring his people to the surface. It is in such a friendly world that the Yaruro literally sits, listens, and looks, almost communing with his environment. Perhaps it is not out of place to mention at this point that this reaction on the part of the Yaruros is not difficult to understand, that perhaps we ought not to rationalize this attitude of the Yaruro entirely on the basis of superstition or religious ideas; anyone who has lived on the plains, exposed day and night to nature, soon loses any feeling of lonesomeness. This response on the part of the Yaruros is shared by the llaneros, who do not seem to be so perfectly at ease as when they are alone in the plains.

THE YARURO UNIVERSE

According to the Yaruros the world has experienced a series of metamorphoses. Some of the events which have transformed the world from its original form are attributed to the direct intervention of the various gods and races of mankind, but others remain unexplainable.

How much of Yaruro cosmic ideas have been borrowed from the missionaries it is difficult to say at this point. Missionaries have been among them from time to time but the Yaruros have been abandoned so completely so many times that the result and confusion is difficult if not impossible to unravel—a thing which can be done only when we have thorough descriptive studies of the various tribes of the Columbian plains and the tribes of Guiana. The comparative ma-

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

criticism of Kuma, and there is even an implication that she always acts with the greatest wisdom.

THE LAND OF KUMA

Kuma lives in the west, apparently beyond the horizon. In the month of March and in early April, about 9 o'clock in the evening, there is a glow in the western sky, a beautiful phenomenon, which the Yaruros explained is the reflection from Kuma's land. Its exact geographic position does not seem to be known and is as hazy as a Catholic's idea of the position of Heaven. For instance, we are told that the stars are both the lights from Kuma Land and the people from that land walking about at night, and yet the Land of Kuma is localized somewhere in the west.

This land is described sometimes as a vast and clean savanna, treeless and full of game, and at other times as a savanna with a huge town in which Kuma and her people live. This latter conception springs from the association the modern Yaruros have between wealth, comfort, power, and those material things which the civilized peoples possess. Towns are included among the products of the civilized. In the same way we find that although the Yaruros are a horseless people, Kuma and her people seem to have an abundance of horses. Apparently those things which are denied the Yaruros in this land are to be found in the next and shamanism is the means of expressing the longings of the living Yaruros.

THE LAND OF KIBEROH

In contrast with the beautiful world in which Kuma lives and to which all Yaruros expect to go, Kiberoh rules over a dark land inhabited by those unfortunate races of mankind left in the hole when the rope dropped by Hatchawa was broken by a too-heavy pregnant woman. Not much is known, nor is there much interest on the part of the Yaruros about this unpleasant region. However, this must not be taken that they have a belief in hell as Father Gumilla reported. According to this author the Yaruros believed in an evil spirit called Tighitighi. On the contrary, my informants identified Tighitighi merely as a large hawk which has no relation to the devil.

PUANÁ

Puaná stands out as the indulgent parent and teacher of Hatchawa. He is also the artisan who invented all of the implements now used by the Yaruros. He is conceived of as the great snake, and in fact is so portrayed on the gourd rattles of the shamans, yet there is a

4: Leeds E-5 (1958) 1960 SS19 Yaruro SS19

the community may do the shaman's work if he chooses, just as any can travel to the other-world or commune with the gods, although, because of age, temperament, or individual taste, not every one does so. There were, in fact, two shamans among the nine men of the writer's village, as well as a number of men who cured and who occasionally sang verse intonations in the *tonghés* although they were not shamans. The shamans are no more than respected community members outside the ceremony. Here again we observe the egalitarianism and individual self-determinism which is so much a pattern of this culture.

The *tonghé* also clearly shows the relationships which prevail between men and gods. The shamans and the other adults of the village converse with the gods in great mutual respect. They do not manipulate them nor minister to them, nor implore them. Before the gods, they are in a position corresponding to active and adept junior members of the village before their elders and especially their lineal ascendants. Furthermore, in a very real sense, no individual person, *qua* person, deals with the gods. The community, with its religious catalyst, the shaman, is the unit of action. The only individual relations with the gods occur in dreams, unconsciousness, and death. Dreams about gods are made public by singing aloud in sleep, the experience of unconsciousness is recounted publicly, and death, too, becomes public because the dead man is accessible through the *tonghés*.

The directness of contact between man and gods again emphasizes the unity of cosmos, society, and man. Within this unity, the sharp division of a male sphere from a female sphere is found. These quite coordinate spheres, in the other-worlds as in the hither-world, in religion as in socio-economic life, are linked through the household.

In conclusion, I would like briefly to review the major dimensions of Yaruro ideology. We may state these as a set of propositions, each presenting a major dimension of the ideology.

1. Cosmic structure. ***The cosmos is static, limited, concrete, and internally continuous in that no barriers separate man and his society in the physical world from the nonphysical world.*** The parts of the universe together form a rather rigid, symmetrical, architectonic structure, although each individual Yaruro may vary the description of the whole to suit his particular taste. All parts are of roughly coordinate importance. The major motions of nature, such as thunder and lightning, the revolutions of sun and moon, are often embodied, personalized, and independently operating entities, moved by semi-human motivations.

2. The good. ***Goodness inheres generally in the cosmos as a system. The goodness manifests itself in understood causes and concretely and describably known parts of the cosmos which, whether places, persons, or things, are given exact locations.*** Conversely all known and localizable objects, persons, or places and understood causes are generally good.

3. The not-good. ***Evil, which is not polar to good, finds its locus in specific persons, things, or events inside or outside the cosmos, and is manifest in specific results. The underlying causes of evil, however, are inac-***